

WARMINSTER RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Medical Officer's Report for 1902.

WARMINSTER, JANUARY 22, 1903.

GENTLEMEN,

Another period has arrived for me to present to you my Annual Report as to the health and sanitary condition of the district. My information as to the existing condition of the district, and particularly of certain parts that I know require supervision, has been obtained by regular inspection, the result of which has been reported to you at your monthly meetings, and I think these inspections have been the means of discovering and remedying many insanitary conditions. In these inspections, particular attention has been paid to the condition of the dairies, and various defects have been reported, all of which have, or are in course of being attended to.

DEATH RATE.

During the year the number of deaths registered in the district was 94, to which number must be added the names of three persons dying in the Cottage Hospital and Workhouse belonging to the district, which gives a total of 97 as the actual number ; equal to a death rate of 15·5 per 1000.

The ages of death ranged from two hours to 85 years, and the deaths of persons over 80 years of age numbered 17. The deaths of children under one year of age numbered nine, four of which died within a few hours of birth. No death occurred from infectious disease.

BIRTH RATE.

The births numbered 112, equal to a birth rate of 17·9 per 1000.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

I will now refer to the presence of infectious diseases during the year.

Only sixteen cases were reported to me, viz. : Eleven of Scarlet Fever, three of Erysipelas, one of Diphtheria, and one of Enteric Fever. The case of

Diphtheria and also two cases of Scarlet Fever occurred at Corsley, four cases of Scarlet Fever at Longbridge Deverill, one at Hill Deverill, and four at Horningsham, three of the latter cases being in the same household.

The case of Enteric Fever occurred at Upton Scudamore, but the disease was contracted outside the district.

WATER SUPPLY.

The Water Supply is varied and abundant, shallow wells abounding as well as natural springs, and, with the exception of the parish of Upton Scudamore, I have had no complaint of the scarcity of water. The subject of the Water Supply in this village was fully reported in my last annual report, and the matter is now under the consideration of the Council. The complaints as to the quality and supply of water in this village are as rife as ever. The village of Corsley has a separate water supply, and Heytesbury and the adjoining parish of Norton Bavant are supplied from a deep well sunk in the chalk, the water being of the purest description. Shallow wells abound in the Deverills, and are very liable to pollution from surface water; and there are also a number of old wells in Crockerton that have become polluted from constant filtration. Occasionally during a long drought there is a scarcity of water in the villages of Imber and Chitterne.

INSPECTION OF THE DISTRICT.

The cottage accommodation remains in much the same state as reported in my last two annual reports, but a reduced population has caused many of the worst cottages to become void and eventually uninhabitable.

The old type of privy is too much in vogue, and by degrees should be replaced by closets of more improved construction; a great many of the old type have been converted into earth closets at our suggestion, and I hope the same improvement will be persisted in. The objections to the old class of privy are :- That there is accumulated a great mass of filth usually in a state of putridity, and consequently the adjacent soil and also the water supply becomes tainted. The great objection to the pail, or dry earth system, is the constant attention required, otherwise the closet becomes a nuisance.

I think I ought to mention a matter affecting the children of the village of Corsley, and that is the inconvenient situation of the village school. The majority of the children have to walk two miles daily to school, which in fine weather is rather beneficial than otherwise, but during the winter months they often appear at school with damp feet and wet clothes, in which they have to stay for the remainder of the day. This has been the cause of serious illness in many of the children attending the school. It is unfortunate that in a large, straggling parish like this, the school should be situated in that part of the parish where it is least required, the school at Chapmanslade being most convenient for children in that vicinity.

The only factories or workshops that could come under the provisions of the Factory and Workshop Act, 1901, are two wool stores at Sutton Veny and Codford employing about ten or twelve hands, and a few flour mills mostly driven by water power. These have been inspected and reported on by the Sanitary Officer.

No offensive trades are carried on, and there are no common lodging houses.

The bakehouses and slaughterhouses have been regularly inspected and found satisfactory.

The statistical tables required by the Local Government Board are appended to this report.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

FREDERICK I. FLOWER,

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman Warminster Rural District Council.

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Rural District Council.

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